

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION APPROVES ADDITIONS TO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES IN FLORIDA, TEXAS

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission chaired by Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton has approved additions to two national wildlife refuges--Chassahowitzka in Florida and Brazoria in Texas.

By approving purchase of 313 additional acres for Chassahowitzka and 330 acres more for Brazoria, the Commission brought both refuges to nearly completed status. Only about 900 acres remain to be acquired to bring Chassahowitzka to its ultimate size of approximately 31,000 acres and Brazoria lacks about 2,000 acres of its final total of about 12,000.

During the year, the Commission, which decides on proposed land acquisitions through funds from the sale of "duck stamps" required of waterfowl hunters, has authorized completion of six other refuges. The refuges are operated by Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service.

In addition to Secretary Morton, other Commission members are Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz, Secretary of Transportation John Volpe, Senator Henry Bellmon of Oklahoma, Senator Lee Metcalf of Montana, Representative Silvio Conte of Massachusetts, and Representative John Dingell of Michigan.

Both refuges are located on the Gulf of Mexico--Chassahowitzka 70 miles north of Tampa, Fla., and Brazoria 50 miles south of Houston, Tex.

Chassahowitzka provides habitat for large populations of waterfowl, wading birds, shore birds and predaceous birds, as well as significant numbers of alligators, manatees, raccoons, mink, and other mammals.

Millions of waterfowl, representing at least 16 species of ducks and six species and subspecies of geese, are dependent on the winter habitat of the Texas Gulf Coast, of which Brazoria Refuge is a vital part. The 330 acres approved by the Commission provide excellent habitat fronting on Cox Lake.

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